

# THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

*This bulletin is published for readers at home and abroad by the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information, London, to elucidate the spiritual issues at stake in the war, and to provide information concerning the British Churches in wartime, as well as their contribution to post-war reconstruction.*

Number 233

APRIL 20th, 1944

## THE WAR AND THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

The far-reaching effects of an upheaval like the present war could not fail to have marked influence on an institution like the ministry of the Christian Church. In the first place the demand for great numbers of chaplains for the forces has reduced the present man-power for the work of the ministry of all the churches, and this shortage of men in the civilian churches has resulted already in the temporary linking up of churches and parishes. It would not be surprising if some of these groupings, entered upon because of the war-time emergency, proved to be of permanent value. Another important factor has been the remarkable opportunity for close and friendly contact with men and women of all types enjoyed by the chaplains, and this has given the Church a chance to learn a great deal about the ideas, interests, hopes, anxieties, the ways of thought and life of Everyman. The discoveries and insights of these days, the lessons learned by the padres in the Padres' Hours, and the countless other discoveries of war-time have given rise to serious discussion as to the most important qualifications for the Christian Ministry in the modern world. These have added special interest to the Report on Training for Ministry, recently issued by the Archbishop's Commission on that subject (Press and Publications Board of the Church Assembly, 2, Great Peter Street, London, S.W.1, 2s. 6d.).

But the experiences of the chaplains have opened up another subject, related to the former, viz. the large number of men in the forces who themselves wish to enter the ministry of one of the Churches after the war. We have already referred to the special efforts of the Church of England to keep in touch with these men—of whom some 2,000 are already enrolled—and we have mentioned the schemes for giving these men some preliminary training even before they are demobilised. We have recently seen the

plans of the Church of Scotland for dealing with their service candidates, and we propose to summarise them, alongside of the Anglican report on training, as an example of some representative British thinking on two separate but related aspects of an important problem, emphasised, but by no means created, by the war.

### The Anglican Report on Training

The commission was instructed

"To consider the problems connected with the selection, testing, and training, both before and after ordination to the diaconate, of those who are being called to serve in the sacred ministry of the Church."

The scheme aims at developing greater powers of spiritual leadership and producing a clergy who from their training are more in touch with social, industrial, and rural life, more familiar with modern scientific and secular thought, and able to bridge the gulf that exists to-day between the presuppositions of the ecclesiastical world and those of ordinary men. The commission is anxious to obviate the weakness of any diocesan method of selection, to eliminate the element of "cramming" in the present system of training, and to provide continued guidance for those newly ordained.

### Gifts of Leadership

The report says the Church needs many more men drawn from all sections of the community with gifts of leadership and of intellectual power. Candidates from all types of secondary schools and from universities are far fewer than they should be. The newer universities supply very few. The number of first class honours men who offer themselves is very small.

"It must be one of our most important duties (says the report) to consider the reasons springing either from the state of our society

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**BRITISH INFORMATION SERVICES**

*An Agency of The British Government*

**30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y.**



or from the policy or lack of policy of the Church, which hinder the right men in adequate numbers from seeking ordination. . . . It is, we think, certain and far from surprising that young men are powerfully attracted by the fascination and the possibilities of studies, and of the practical application of studies, which are primarily concerned with the material basis of our civilisation. They are deeply influenced by teaching which implies or directly propagates the view that scientific progress can unaided meet the needs of man, satisfy his aspirations, and explain his nature."

The commission is of opinion that the Church, while undertaking and making it widely known that she is undertaking a vigorous policy of reform, should call for recruits to the ministry with far more energy and directness than has yet been shown.

Dealing with the preparations for recruitment, the report suggests that specialists in religious teaching should be available in schools of all types, and courses in Biblical study for teachers should be multiplied and encouraged. Graduated literature should be provided for schools, giving a simple theology and information about the ministry, the story of the Church, the life of a parish priest, and the Church and modern problems. A special Church of England minister should be appointed as a liaison officer for every modern university; there should be post-graduate scholarships available to help those who find their vocation for the ministry late in their university career; the Church should support the establishment and endowment of theological faculties on an interdenominational basis in modern universities, the provision of interdenominational centres for worship and discussion, and cooperate with the Student Christian Movement in every possible way.

The report proposes the setting up of regional committees of selection for large areas, their membership to include laymen of wide experience; extending the course of training by a year for all ordinands, with an additional term's training in teaching; the transference of most of the existing detached colleges to university centres, and the opening of new colleges in modern universities. A director of training should be appointed in every diocese to be in contact with candidates while in training, and to advise young priests for not less than three years after ordination.

The establishment of "refresher" colleges for the provinces of Canterbury and York, of a central college of advanced study for the whole Anglican Communion, and of an interdenominational college in connection with the British Council of Churches and the Oecumenical movement are also recommended.

## Oversea Work

In the wider field of the Anglican Communion as a whole the report opens up new ground. After emphasising that ordination is to the ministry in the Church universal, the commission advocates in place of separate missionary colleges, a "basic training" for the home and oversea churches, greater interchange of students, the linking of home and oversea colleges, the association of ordinands with missionary campaigns during vacations, and as the standard of oversea colleges rises, the partial training in them of men from the home country for oversea work. A rural bias should be given to the training of those who intend to be country clergy.

## The Church of Scotland Scheme of Ex-Service Candidates

The plans of the Church of Scotland were announced at the end of last year by the Moderator of the General Assembly, Prof. John Baillie, who wrote as follows in connection with a memorandum sent out to Church of Scotland chaplains and officiating chaplains.

*"Our Church's Committee on Education for the Ministry has for some time past been giving serious thought to the question of finding new recruits for the ministry among men now serving with His Majesty's Forces or engaged in other forms of national service. The memorandum which follows is the outcome of the Committee's careful consideration of the matter, and I would commend it to the earnest attention of all who have any opportunity of helping us in this most important endeavour. Any relevant information and practical suggestions will be most gratefully welcomed. Our end can be achieved only through the diligent co-operation of those actually in touch with the men in the Forces."*

JOHN BAILLIE,

Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

The Memorandum, which is of general interest, is, in substance, as follows:—

### Recruits Needed for the Christian Ministry

If the Church of Scotland is to meet the challenge and the opportunity with which it will be faced after the war, it must without delay secure a large number of recruits for its ministry. There are many men now in our armed forces who have revealed, in their war service, abilities of many kinds which would find fullest scope in the Christian ministry, and who would respond to an appeal for this form of service if the need for it, and the opportunities it offers, were convincingly put before them.



## The Challenge and the Opportunity

No calling offers greater or more varied opportunities of unselfish service than the ministry. To all thoughtful people the war has been a dreadful revelation of the tragic nature of human life and of mankind's desperate need; to Christians it should also have brought a fresh realisation of the relevance of the Gospel of Christ. The whole world has now become a single community. But it is a community tragically divided against itself; it has lost the true spirit of community, which is love of God and of man, and it is being ruined everywhere by the self-centredness which is the essence of sin. Yet in this situation there already exists, throughout the world, the community which is God's instrument for the salvation of mankind through the Gospel—the Church of Christ. That is why the end of the war will bring the Church everywhere so great a challenge and so great an opportunity.

In our own country great changes are impending, in industry, in education, in social life generally. New urban communities will come into being as a result of industrial changes and developments, while rural life seems likely to regain an importance in the national economy which it has lost for nearly a century. If Scotland does not build the new structure of her national life on the old foundations of Christ and the Church, she will not only be untrue to what is best in her history and traditions, but will be building on sand and labouring in vain.

In other parts of the world, for which the Church of Scotland has some responsibility, the need will be no less great. The young Churches in Africa, India and China face an enormous and many-sided task of evangelisation, in which they will for long to come need help of many kinds from older Churches like our own, and especially the help which can best be given by ordained men who have had an adequate theological training.

## How Chaplains Can Help

*It is in view of this challenge and this opportunity that we ask for the help of chaplains in all branches of the Services, in order that the claims of the ministry as a vocation may be effectively brought before likely candidates.* In this matter chaplains, as the official representatives of the Church, have a special responsibility and a special opportunity—as many of them have already recognised—and they can render a service of the very greatest importance. They themselves will know best in what ways it can most usefully be rendered, in the very varied conditions in which their work is done. This might well be a subject for consideration at

chaplains' conferences. The "Padre's Hour" may afford an occasion for a talk about the challenge and the opportunity which the critical period just ahead of us will bring to the Church; this might open the way for more personal contacts with individuals.

## The Kind of Men Needed

In dealing with possible candidates chaplains will, of course, always bear in mind that the Christian ministry, just because it offers great opportunities for service, also makes stern demands and sets high standards. Whatever a man's abilities, he ought not to enter the ministry unless he has a genuine personal faith in Jesus Christ and a sincere desire to devote his life to His service. In trying to judge of the genuineness of a man's profession and the rightness of his motives, as well as of his character and ability, a chaplain will do well to take account of his war-time record and the opinion which those with whom, and under whom, he has served have formed about him.

## Procedure

The final decision about any candidate will not be made simply on a chaplain's recommendation. By the law of the Church of Scotland every candidate for the ministry must be nominated by the Presbytery with which he is connected. But the Committee on Education for the Ministry has judged it desirable to appoint a special "Selection Committee for Service Candidates," which will be concerned with the selection and with the training of all candidates who have served in the Forces. *The Secretary of this Committee is the Rev. Professor D. M. Baillie, D.D., of St. Andrews (121, George Street, Edinburgh, 2).*

When a chaplain is satisfied in a general way about a man's suitability, he should send his name and Service address, along with a brief confidential report, to Professor Baillie. The Selection Committee will then get from the candidate himself any further information about his career and attainments which it may be desirable to have, will keep in touch with him while he remains in the Forces, and, if he should find it possible to undertake any preliminary studies, will arrange to give him guidance and help with these. In most cases candidates will be interviewed by the Committee; when possible, this will be done before demobilisation.

## The Training of Candidates

It is only then that it will be possible to say definitely what course of training any man will be required to take, since naturally this will vary with his experience and attain-



ments. No service is done, either to a man himself or to the Church, by sending him into the exacting work of the ministry inadequately prepared and equipped. On the other hand, both the need of the Church and the special position of war-service candidates make it desirable that the course of training should not be any longer that it need be.

#### Those Who Had Already Chosen the Ministry

What has been said above refers to men who before the war had not thought seriously of entering the Christian ministry. But there are in the Forces many who had already decided to do so, and had even begun their training for it. There is a danger that some of these may be deflected from their intention in consequence of their war experience (as happened in the last war). The Church ought not to leave such men to themselves at a time when they, and their sense of vocation, are being severely tested; it should keep in touch with them and give them all the help, encouragement, and guidance it can.

#### THE NAZIS' WAY WITH ORDINANDS

The Norwegian Quisling authorities have put an end to the instruction and education of theological students preparing for the Ministry.

The theological faculty of the University was closed some time ago. Most of the priests of the Norwegian Church do not take the course of the University Theological Faculty, but study at the Parochial Faculty. The steps taken by the authorities must have serious effects on the religious life of Norway. The reason for these measures, the authorities allege, is that more than 200 theological students who have finished their studies at the Parochial Faculty refuse to exercise their Ministry in the Norwegian Church (under the Quislings). The authorities say that as the education has had no practical result, it can well be suppressed.

The Parochial Faculty was founded in 1911 and its examinations were recognised in 1913. It is a private Faculty, and supported by collections. Students coming from this Faculty have the same rights in the Norwegian Church as those who come from the University Faculty. It is often the case that parishes prefer candidates from this Faculty to those from the University. Its professors are not chosen by the public authorities and the best-known is Professor Hallesby who is at present in the Concentration Camp of Grini.

The background of the action described above can be seen in the following news from a Swedish source:

The united Church front against the Quisling authorities has lately been again shown

by the refusal of large numbers of theological candidates to be ordained under the ægis of the Church Department. *Svenska Morgenbladet* reports:—

The Quisling Ministry of Church Affairs has sent a circular to priests and theological candidates signed by the Minister, Skancke.

In this letter he urges priests and theologians to put themselves at the service of the Church through the Minister of Church Affairs.

"The Church needs priests," he says, "who will care for the faith of our Church and preach the word of God to our people as loyal servants of the authorities and the chiefs of State. Those who now refuse merely help Bolshevism and the forces destructive of society, and they must understand that they do more harm than good to their Church and their country. The Church ought to continue its work and to see that clergy are recruited who understand the age and have the courage of their convictions."

In the same document an abridged course of theology is announced for those who wish to become priests and who cannot take the course of the University Theological Faculty or of the Parochial Faculty, both of which are closed. The examination after the abridged course will confer the same rights as the old Theological examinations.

"This abridged course is a permanent condemnation of the 200 priests and theological candidates who have betrayed their Church when it needed them." (A reference to the refusal of theological candidates to serve under the Ministry of Church Affairs.—Ed.)

#### A Danish Ordinand is Murdered

The Swedish paper *Svenska Morgenbladet* (28th March) reported the burial of a Danish theological student named Erik Bunck-Christensen, who had been assassinated by the Gestapo in Copenhagen. "The burial took place at St. Andrew's Church. The Danish Lutheran Bishop, Fuglesang-Damgaard, began his sermon by quoting the words of Jesus:—'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'

"During his address, he said:

"An active love was the basis of all the actions of the deceased. From his father and mother he had learned to found his life on the Christian religion and on love for his country. He clearly saw his goal, he loved Denmark and wished to give his life for the future of his country. His love for his country sprang from his love for the Church, for the service of which he was preparing himself.

"After the Bishop's address, the hymn 'A safe stronghold our God is still' was sung."